



## Students 'Seek First' in 2022-23

### Aquinas advances a new CAO

By Cecilia Sisco

"Seek First" is this year's theme for the school year. With this theme students and staff are hoping to intensify their focus on God.

Fr. Ben Holdren, Fr. Michael Ventre, and Mrs. Laura Adair worked together to create this year's theme and logo. "Fr. Holdren and I sat down, and we know we're a Catholic school, but we wanted to have a real focus. We know this is a Catholic school, so why not seek Him first," Ventre said.

The logo this year is a compass accompanied by a crown. "The first thing you see is the compass and it's pointing towards the kingdom. The compass is internal, and it points to the direction we need to go," Adair said.

"[Seek First] does not mean we can't excel at academics, on the court, the arts. It's just bringing all that together to one source. Trying to connect my passions and talents are united with Christ," Ventre said. "The

theme will give us a good foundation to keep a positive religious attitude in the school year," Senior Aletha Breiner added.

Students and staff can practice the theme in many ways. "The biggest thing I'm trying to do is think more of what God wants me to do and to pray more," Adair said. Ventre encourages more frequent confession, reading scripture daily, and going to Mass every chance possible. School Mass is offered Tuesday and Friday every week for all staff and students and at 7:20 am Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday for the public.

"[The theme] shows God takes care of everything. If we focus on God and making it to His kingdom, our worries aren't relevant," Adair said. Breiner added the theme is also important because it is fitting for what the school wants to achieve this year.

Ventre thinks the theme is great. "We can take everything we do and connect it with who we are and what we want to do with our lives."



Fr. Michael Ventre gives his homily at the first Mass of the 2022-23 school year. Ventre took the position of chief administrative officer after being the assistant administrative officer for two years.

By L. Hartman

By Cecilia Sisco

With the new 2022-23 school year Aquinas Catholic Schools welcomed a new chief administrative officer. Fr. Michael Ventre took over the role this year after Fr. Sean Timmerman transferred to his new assignment in Plattsmouth, NE.

In March, 2021, the priests found out their new positions and assignment changes. "I was not surprised; I knew I would be the chief administrator probably after a couple of years," Ventre said. This made Ventre change from assistant to chief administrative officer.

Before the change Ventre oversaw Presentation Parish in Marietta, NE. Now, however, Ventre stays as an in-residence priest at St. Mary's in David City. "It's nice being able to commit myself [at Aquinas], and be more present here, but it's weird on the weekends just being the third priest."

Ventre has many plans for the future of the school. "This year we're working on Catholic identity. We want to help our teachers because if we help the teachers, they'll help the students better," Ventre said. According to Ventre changes for the school will be going to be "little bit by little bit."

"I hope the biggest change will be with the students, the culture and identity of the school and some growth with the students," Ventre said. According to Ventre if the students grow and learn, the rest of the school will improve.

Ventre has challenges in the job. "We've been doing things for a long time a certain way, and change can be hard. We may need to either reinforce what we are doing or look at things in a different light," Ventre stated.

Ventre feels excited job. "Anything we can do at the school to make it more beautiful and up to date and make it better for our students I'm excited for."



# Aquinas encounters Christ in numerous ways

By Maggie Svec

Summer travels are not always just about hitting the beach. This past summer several Aquinas students traveled to do mission work and learn more about their faith.

In June a group of students traveled to Gallup, New Mexico, to assist the Little Sisters of the Poor and the Missionaries of Charity. The group worked closely with the sisters, missionaries, and the poor. Another group of students left in June to travel to Italy. While in Italy, the students explored Rome and Assisi, visiting various cathedrals and religious sites.

Senior Brooke Hoelscher was one of the students who traveled to Italy. The trip helped Hoelscher grow in her faith. "It showed me how global Catholicism really is and how strong a foundation the Church

actually has," Hoelscher said.

Junior Stellan Wessling was among those students who went to Gallup. Wessling was able to learn from the Missionaries of Charity and the sacrifices they make. "[The missionaries] perform their duties with such devotion and love, and they see Jesus in every person they meet," Wessling said.

On both trips the Aquinas students stepped out of their comfort zone. For Wessling stepping outside of his comfort zone meant working with and speaking to the homeless. Hoelscher said being in a different country meant learning to adjust to a different etiquette and humbling herself. Another challenge students on the Italy trip faced was traveling on foot. Hoelscher said, "We walked a lot, about ten miles daily."

Aquinas students also went on various other church related trips this summer, including the Steubenville Youth Conference,

TEC Retreats, and the Diocesan Canoe Trip.



Junior Robert Pytlik offers a trumpet at the first Mass of the year. This year, the school has Mass twice a week, with a different house assisting. Photo by L. Hartman

## CrownPrints

The *Crown Prints* is published six times a year to inform, educate, and entertain the Aquinas community. We urge letters to the editor. Letters should be given to Ms. Jean A. Brown in Room 16. Letters must be signed; however, anonymity, if requested, will be granted if deemed necessary.

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The *Crown Prints* is a publication produced by the journalism department at Aquinas High School, David City, Nebraska 68632.

# Aquinas cafeteria receives several upgrades

By Aletha Breiner

During the summer of 2022, the Aquinas cafeteria received wall and floor upgrades. Due to water problems and an inspection last spring, the upgrades were a necessity.

According to maintenance coordinator Mr. Cliff Kovar, the upgrades included new floor tiles in the cafeteria and kitchen, along with a fresh coat of paint on the walls. "[The tile] requires little maintenance and can be waxed," Kovar said. The kitchen floor now features seamless tile and nonslip surface for safety purposes. The previous floor tile was cracking and posed a danger to students and staff.

Head cook Mrs. Jenny White believes these changes were necessary for the school. "We had tile popping up when we had issues with sewage," White said. Kovar also noted the kitchen received a grant to replace the floor. Replacing tile proved to

be a longer process than anticipated. "All appliances and equipment had to be removed. Then contractors skim coated the floor to fill imperfections," Kovar said. Removing the tile and old adhesive was more time consuming than anticipated. Midwest Flooring in Lincoln helped with the process.

These changes will be an asset for the school, according to White. "The state will be happy to see new floors, and it makes for a nicer work environment," White said. Kovar hopes these changes help students and staff appreciate the school more.

In the future, Kovar hopes to replace the plumbing and electrical systems in the school to "prevent future catastrophic events." White also wants to upgrade the kitchen space to allow more room and better workflow.



# Changing the 'book' for a finer look

By Mackenzie Kobza

Aquinas students and staff implemented new changes to the handbook for the 2022-2023 school year. The rules changed for the overall safety and well-being of students

A new rule entailed students not being able to carry bookbags throughout the school day. The handbook says all students' bookbags must stay in their lockers during the entire school day. "There were safety concerns on a couple different fronts," Principal Mr. Spencer Zysset said.

Safety concerns included students being able to conceal items such as vaping paraphernalia, food and weapons in their bookbags. Additionally having bookbags scattered on the ground could cause tripping hazards during an emergency.

Another rule reviewed and changed was how detentions would be handled. In previous years students served detentions during their lunch period in the office. Now students serve detentions after school from 3:35-4:05.

Senior Luke Sellers said, "[New detention rules] hold them more accountable." Zysset added, "Lunch detentions were not that big of a deal. After talking to the student council and other students during the summer, I came to the conclusion that students did not care enough about detention not to do whatever was going to get them in trouble."

Other rule changes concerned the uniform code. The rule allowed students to wear an Aquinas crewneck without a polo underneath. The crewnecks cannot have a hood or pockets. Students also do not have to wear a lanyard with their school ID's inside during the school day. However, students still need their IDs to get lunch and check out books in the library, but wearing lanyards is optional.

The school also clarified some of the existing rules. This included the credit appeal process for students. If a student misses more than ten days of a class (excused or unexcused) during a semester, he loses credit for that class. Students have the option to appeal this credit loss. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the principal no more than three business days after the student receives notification about the loss of credit.

The rule for use of drug, alcohol, or tobacco merged to have the same consequences. All first-time offenses will receive two weeks of no participation in activity events. A second offense causes ineligibility for two months of activity events. "[The consequences] put into reality how serious those choices are," Sellers said.

"I really haven't heard much feedback on any of the changes. I am more than wel-

come to listen to questions, and I won't be offended if people are upset by the new rules," Zysset stated. Sellers added he feels the changes are "for the better" and "hold people more accountable."



Sophomore Finley Zook works on a computer in the classroom. Handbook rules indicate students should have less than ten absences, excused or unexcused, during a semester. Photo by C. Sisco.

# Back into the swing of school



Dustbowl



# New staff invade Aquinas

By Maggie Svec

The beginning of the 2022-23 school year brought new additions to Aquinas' staff. One new addition was Mrs. Michaela Moravec, Aquinas' new advancement and alumni director.

Moravec attended high school at Grand Island Northwest. She then went on to Cypress College in California to receive a degree in Mortuary Science. Prior to working at Aquinas, Moravec worked at Chermok Funeral Home, Storm Aeronautics, and Moravec Financial. Moravec is still a licensed funeral director.

Michaela has been married to 2006 alumni Mr. Trevor Moravec for ten years. The couple has three children. Jace and Jennifer, aged 7 and 5 respectively, attend Aquinas Elementary. Their youngest, Mary, is two years old.

Moravec's in-laws, Russ and Diane Moravec, motivated her to take this position: "[I saw] how dedicated and generous Russ and Diane are to Aquinas. I would like to continue the legacy of generous donors." Moravec believes the hardest part of this job will be keeping up with deadlines.

By Mackenzie Kobza

Aquinas welcomed a new world history, psychology/sociology, and middle school computers teacher during the 2022-2023 school year. Ms. Megan Klenke took this position with hopes of professional growth.

Klenke grew up in Friend, NE and attended Friend High School. She played softball, basketball, and track as well as being involved in many clubs. These clubs included quiz bowl, choir, band, one act, and National Honor Society.

After high school, Klenke attended college at Concordia University in Seward, NE. She continued her softball career there. After receiving her Bachelor's of Science in secondary education with an endorsement in social sciences, she continued subbing for many schools in the area, including Aquinas.

Klenke had many hobbies in high school, including horse showing and trap shooting. Her hobbies now consist of hiking, enjoying nature and geocaching. "The campus

Moravec will be in charge of the twenty-fifth annual spring Gold Rush fundraising event with the theme "A Walk Down Memory Lane." Moravec and her husband were involved with Gold Rush as committee members for eleven years prior to her working at Aquinas. She hopes to reach more alumni with this year's event, as well as break the record for the amount of money raised. Moravec also hopes to raise funds to update security on each of the Aquinas



Mrs. Michaela Moravec recently replaced Mrs. Deb Svec as Aquinas's Advancement Director. Svec retired after 29 years. Photo by Lacie Hartman.

minister at Concordia always said that the eleventh commandment was to spend as much time outside on nice days as you can. So I do."

Klenke has one younger sister Danielle who is a senior at Concordia University. Danielle also plays softball for Concordia and is only in her junior season because of COVID-19. Klenke's parents are Mr. and Mrs. Nate and Tammy Klenke.

"Aquinas was a very welcoming environment. The kids are here to learn and have no outside distractions which is great as a first-year teacher," Klenke stated. The atmosphere Aquinas has created has been "welcoming and friendly." Klenke did part of her student teaching experience at Aquinas, with co-operating teachers Mrs. Ann Heermann and Mr. Ron Mimick.

Klenke had plans to help students 'be the best versions of themselves' at Aquinas. "I plan to help students grow in their education and grow in themselves," Klenke said.

By Noah Grady

The choir program gained a new choir director in Mrs. Shelby Schaunaman for the 2022-2023 school year. Schaunaman has big plans to change how the school feels about vocal music.

Schaunaman been involved in music her entire life. According to Schaunaman she first fell in love with music and grew up songwriting, which "became a safe place" for her. Schaunaman has learned to play piano, guitar, ukulele, and clarinet, in addition to her vocal abilities.

Schaunaman not only has been learning music, but also teaching music since high school. "I taught K-6 summer camp all through high school. I also did a lot of teaching during observations," Schaunaman said.

Schaunaman grew up in Seward, Nebraska. She graduated from Seward High School and went on to Concordia University to study music. According to Schaunaman, she was a section leader in choir during college.

Schaunaman is familiar with the Aquinas area, as she student taught at Aquinas Catholic Schools. "I knew a lot of the procedures coming in. The first day was a lot less nerve-racking, and being able to know the students and pick off where we left off was helpful."

Schaunaman teaches middle and high school choir and K-4 Music. She also helps coach middle school sports. Schaunaman helps high school students try out for events such as all-state chorus and singing the Star-Spangled Banner at games.

Schaunaman plans to work to change the vocal music atmosphere at Aquinas, and it has not been easy. Schaunaman said, "The biggest challenge I had is helping kids come out of their musical shell." Schaunaman believes she will learn more about herself while changing the vocal music program.

Schaunaman's plan revolves around helping students stepping out of their comfort zones. "The biggest thing I am stressing with my middle schoolers is you do not have to be musically involved to make music," Schaunaman said. She also plans to help students become more involved with music once the students come out of their comfort zone.



# Lady Monarchs take opening 'swing' at promising season

By Noah Grady

Aquinas Volleyball is off to another challenging season. The team played Guardian Angel Central Catholic, Kearney Catholic, Hastings, Friend and Scotus in the early season.

Recently the Monarchs lost to Scotus Shamrocks. According to junior outside hitter Rebecca Andel, "We played well the first two sets, but then our energy fell and we started making mistakes and we were knocked down." The set scores were 20-25, 25-25, 9-25, 14-25.

The team came out with a victory over Friend in a regular season game. The girls won each set played, with the scores of 25-18, 25-8, 25-19. According to senior libero Allisen Jelinek, "The game started a little rough. They sent over a lot of tips, but once we adjusted, we gained momentum and we won." The girls also played Friend in a tournament matchup and won against Friend in two sets, the scores 25-20, 25-10.

Aquinas battled also with Hastings Saint Cecilia in the early season. "Hastings lost a lot of senior starters, and we played well against Kearney which gave us momentum and were excited to get on the floor. We ended up losing, but we played well," Jelinek said. The set scores were 23-25 and 14-25.

Kearney Catholic was a tough competitor according to Aquinas head volleyball coach Mr. Jim Kozisek. The girls lost both sets 18-25 and 21-25. Andel stated, "We played really well against Kearney Catholic, but we couldn't close the game out."

"My best game was Guardian Angels. I made sure I was in my spot and played defense to the best of my ability and once someone's playing well, the whole team is playing well," Jelinek said. Guardian Angel Central Catholic Aquinas' first opponent of the 2022 season. The girls lost all three sets 17-25, 22-25, 17-25.

# Early season challenges young team

By Jacob Moravec

The Aquinas Catholic football team opened with 4 challenging games this season. The games against Grand Island Central Catholic, Hardington Cedar Catholic, Lincoln Lutheran, and Scotus, ended with mixed results for the Monarchs.

Recently the football team played Grand Island Central Catholic. According to head coach Mr. Ron Mimick the standout moment of the game was the third interception by senior linebacker Krae Lavicky because it was a confidence booster for the team. The team won 38-0.

The football team also took on Lincoln Lutheran in the early season. According to junior halfback Lydon DeWispelare the highlight of the game was when senior quarterback Luke Sellers completed a deep pass with sophomore flex end Bryant Stouffer because it gave the Monarchs a little momentum. The football team lost the game 20-13.

The football team played Hardington Cedar Catholic in the second game of the season. "The standout moment of the game was when Aquinas kicked a field goal because the play put points on the board," DeWispelare said. The Monarchs lost the game 33-3.

The football team's first game this year was against Scotus Central Catholic. "A.J. Oltmer ran the ball really well and Lydon DeWispelare played really well on defense," Lavicky said. The Monarchs lost the game 7-13

With a small Senior Class this year, many underclassmen have had to step out on to the varsity field. According to head coach Ron Mimick a lot of kids who did not play much varsity last year have had to step up to leadership roles. Mimick said the underclassmen are doing well as a team, and they have all taken a nice step.

The football team has a set pregame schedule they follow. "The team has quiet time and works on focusing during warm ups," Lavicky said. According to DeWispelare the coaches talk to the team and review assignments with players before the game.



Sophomore Brooklyn Stutzman pitches the ball in a game against Guardian Angels Central Catholic. The Lady Monarchs won against the Bluejays 10-0. Stutzman recently hit a career record of 300 strikeouts at the game against Polk County. The softball team's record was 17-8 after Polk County. Photo by M. Svec



# Adapting to hearing loss

*Zysset family learns to adjust due to daughter's hearing loss.*

By Lacie Hartman

According to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders “about 2 to 3 out of every 1,000 children in the United States are born with a detectable level of hearing loss in one or both ears.” Lily Zysset, daughter of Aquinas Middle and High School principal Mr. Spencer Zysset, is one of these children.

As a very young child, Lily had trouble speaking, so Zysset and his wife Jennifer sent Lily to ESU7 (Educational Service Unit #7) in Columbus for speech therapy. Through this interaction, Lily was diagnosed with bi-lateral mild to moderate hearing loss. Lily was 3 years old at this time.

Upon receiving this news, the Zyssets learned to accept their new life quickly. “[The diagnosis] was life changing, but not in the same if we found out she lost a limb; it was easier to adapt to. It helped knowing Lily’s hearing was not going to worsen or be gone completely,” Principal Zysset said.

To adapt to the newfound hearing loss, the Zyssets needed to make many changes in their daily life. The Zyssets taught Lily how to focus on one particular sound, and Lily started wearing hearing aids.

For Mrs. Katie Vavrina, Lily’s kindergarten teacher during the 2021-22 school year, several adjustments were made in her classroom. “First, I had to realize that ‘preferential seating’ does not mean sitting in the front of the classroom, but [Lily] needed to be seated somewhere she could see my face, as well as the faces of her classmates when they were speaking.”

Vavrina also learned how to use a microphone system and advocated for Lily’s other teachers and the priests at Mass to use this special microphone system as well. The microphone is worn around a presenter’s neck and picks up the wearer’s voice; then the person’s voice is sent directly to Lily’s hearing aids. The microphone helps Lily filter out the extra noise and focus in on one

person’s voice.

From Lily’s condition, Principal Zysset discovered the deaf and hard of hearing community of which he had no previous knowledge. Additionally, he learned a better and more direct way to help students find different learning styles to assist them in the future.

Teaching Lily taught Vavrina new lessons as well. “[Lily] taught me that we all have a right to learn in the way that is best for us and will help us be most successful. An important lesson for a teacher,” Vavrina noted. Vavrina admired the way Lily handled adversity and her ability to advocate for herself successfully as a kindergartener.

Vavrina’s advice for working with hard of hearing kids is to be patient and ask questions; use resources such as parents, the school, and the child. “Lily was so knowledgeable about her hearing loss and could usually explain things to me when I was not aware of them.”

Date	Parish	Meal
Oct. 2	St. Peter and Paul- Abie	Duck Dinner
Oct. 16	St. Anthony’s- Bruno	Duck and Pork Dinner
Oct. 22	St. Francis- Bellwood	Brats and Beer
Nov. 6	St. Mary’s- David City (@ Aquinas)	Harvest Festival (Pork Loin Dinner)
Jan. 29	Assumption- Dwight	God Bless America Dinner (Prime Rib or Chicken Breast)

## Sudoku!

5	4			2		8		6
	1	9			7			3
			3			2	1	
9			4	5			2	
		1				6		4
6		4		3	2			8
	6						1	9
4		2			9			5
	9			7		4		2